

Students hear about abstinence, domestic abuse

Published on 01/29/02

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Charleston County Council Chairman Tim Scott took a few moments earlier this month to drop by a cafeteria full of ninth-graders and encourage them to practice abstinence before marriage and to not succumb to peer pressure.

As he urged students in Burke's ninth-grade academy to live principle-centered lives, Scott compared life's pressures to his recent visit to Lowe's Motor Speedway in Charlotte.

He said he and his friends had talked big about driving fast, but when they got behind the wheel, they learned how scary speed could be.

"Don't let MTV tell you how fast to drive — you decide," he said.

He also told the students that abstinence reduces the chance of living in poverty by 92 percent.

The morning's talk then was echoed in a very different way.

After Scott spoke, the students got a little rowdy as Papa Robbie and the Reggae All-stars took the stage and sent out messages against domestic violence and promiscuous sex. Robbie's set included the original work "Don't Chase Him, Replace Him," a song that encourages women to leave abusive men.

The hourlong assembly was part of the school's character-building program called Heritage Keepers, sponsored by Heritage Community Services.

Incorporated in 1995 and based in North Charleston, Heritage is a nonprofit organization that aims to "provide social and educational programs from a traditional, conservative, family centered perspective." Last summer Heritage was awarded nence Education Grant by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources.

Also dropping by Burke that day was Ray Ruddy, a retired businessman who wants to fund a national abstinence program.

Ruddy said millions of Americans have incurable sexually transmitted diseases, and that more American women died last year from STDs than from AIDS. He also argued that

condoms prevent the transmission of HIV but not STDs, calling safe-sex campaigns "junk science."

"It's not popular, let's face it," he said. "But they (kids) need to hear our message because people are dying and women are becoming infertile."

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